A

SERMON

Preached before

The Religious Societies

In the

City of Dublin,

On the 29th of *Septemb.* 1695.

Together with the method to be observed by them at their Meetings, and the Laws of their Society, with the 39 Articles of the Church of *Ireland*,

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By *B. Scroggs*, D. D.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

To the several Religious Societies in the Kingdom of Ireland.

Brethren,

I Have Publish'd this short Discourse according to your Request, and if you are profited by it, and encouraged to prosecute the Good Work you are engaged in, I am not much concern'd what Censure the world may pass upon it. I have also added the Laws and Method to be observ'd by all your Societies thro the whole Kingdom, and

have made a few alterations, and such additions as you desired in the devotion used at your Meetings; and if in any thing else I can serve you, I shall neither spare my pains nor my prayers for you, nor any charges as far as my abilities extend.

And now I must beg leave to put you in mind of a Duty which I have so Frequently and Earnestly urged and repeated heretofore, that above all things you avoid all dissentions and divisions, the fatal Rock upon which the noblest designs

do

do so often split and miscarry, and which has almost ruin'd Christianity it self, against which no persecution nor malice of the Enemy cou'd ever prevail. And therefore beware lest you receive any into your Societies that come for this end, to disturb and distract you, not out of ill-will to Religion in general, but to the Establish't Church, which by your examples is likely to be encreas'd as well as edified. Avoid all disputes, and then you cannot fall into any violence of passion: and

if you ſhou'd be angry, you muſt ſtifle it in the beginning, and never ſuffer it to proceed to a diviſion or ſeparation, or a ſettled grudge or animoſity between parties. And to this end let every ſingle man reſolve to reconcile his Brethren when they are at difference; and let all in general agree to put ſtrictly in Execution that Law which you have for this purpoſe. And may the Favorer and Protector of all good deſigns continue and encreaſe the ſucceſs of your Endeavours, and give you

cou-

courage, and prudence, and perſeverance, and all the Graces that are neceſſary to carry on this great and bleſſed Undertaking. This ſhall always be the Prayer of

Your moſt Affectionate Brother and Humble Servant.

B. Scroggs.

Acts of the Apoſt. 2 Chap. 42 Verſe.

And they continued ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtles Doctrine, and Fellowſhip, and in Breaking of Bread, and in Prayers.

THo I mention only this Verſe for my Text, yet my deſign is to take for my Subject all the manners and cuſtoms of the firſt & beſt of all Chriſtians deſcribed in this and the following Chapters by the Evangeliſt St. *Luke*: and becauſe my diſcourſe is intended only for thoſe ſocieties of young men that have lately aſſembled themſelves with deſign to imitate that primitive Zeal and Piety;

I ſhall take leave to ſpeak only what's proper to them, and that alſo in a more plain and familiar way than is uſual in this place.

All good men muſt be Tranſported with joy, to ſee any thing in this wicked age like that Fervour and Life of Religion that ran thro the whole body of the Primitive Church. It ſhou'd be as pleaſant and ſurprizing as to find Life returning into the eyes and limbs of a dead friend: and certainly, if ever Chriſtianity be recover'd, it muſt be by ſuch means as are now beginning to be uſed; it muſt be by religious ſocieties and combinations againſt the Enemy of our ſouls, by which we warm, and excite, and encourage, and direct one another,

another, and to think to do this by the zeal, or prudence, or the labours of ſingle men, is as great a folly as to expect the conqueſt of our temporal enemies by ſending one man at a time to wage war with their whole armies. I might inſiſt long upon this ſubject, in ſhewing the uſe and neceſſity of ſocieties for the reducing of piety to its primitive vigour; but at preſent 'twill be ſufficient to juſtifie and recommend to all good men theſe particular ſocieties from the practiſe of thoſe Chriſtians mention'd in my Text; for tho they cannot equal 'em in that extraordinary degree of Piety, nor imitate 'em in the miraculous power of the ſpirit; yet it is plain that they reſemble 'em in moſt other reſpects, as I

ſhall

ſhall now prove by ſeveral inſtances.

1ſt. The Chriſtians mention'd in my Text did often meet and converſe together, to improve one another in Piety, and enflame each others Zeal: and this I take to be the meaning of the word, Fellowſhip, in my Text; not only the fellowſhip of the Apoſtles (tho this muſt alſo be underſtood) but fellowſhip with one another in their houſes, and in the abſence of the Apoſtles. For the number of the new Converts being then ſo great, that at one Sermon no fewer than three thouſand were converted, it was impoſſible that the Apoſtles ſhou'd every day be preſent at every Congregation or Aſſembly in their houſes. And beſides, we have examples

examples of such Meetings in the Scriptures, where the people in the absence of the Clergy have met together in a private way for devotion and other holy ends: as we find in the 12th Chapt. of the *Acts*, where, upon the dispersion and flight of the Apostles, *Peter* came to the house of *Mary*, and found there many Disciples gathered together for Prayer. Now tho these Assemblies of Christians were in this unlike our Societies, that the people in them were of all ages and sexes and conditions, but here only men under certain qualifications are admitted; yet their example will warrant and justifie our practise; and if one be lawful, the other is at least as warrantable, since the design and consequence of

their meeting is the ſame, as I ſhall ſhew it to be hereafter. In the mean while we ſhall ſuppoſe 'em thus far to be like, in their meeting together in houſes for private Religious exerciſes. And,

2*dly*, They are alſo like in reſpect of the time of their meeting, which was chiefly upon the Lord's-Day. This day was Conſecrated at firſt by the Apoſtles and Primitive Chriſtians aſſembling upon it for ſeveral religious ends: and tho theſe Aſſemblies met daily, and kept holy every day of the week and every day of their lives, yet the day they kept moſt holy was the Lord's-Day, as we read in the 20*th* of the *Acts*, and the 7*th* verſe. Upon the firſt day of the week when the Diſciples came

came together to break bread; that is, to receive the Sacrament: In which place we may observe that the whole day was kept holy and spent in Religious exercises; for St. *Paul* continued his preaching till it was midnight; and tho this was more than ordinary, because the Apostle was to leave 'em next morning, yet the Primitive Writers do all speak as if the day were wholly and entirely dedicated to Religious uses. And this I mention, because there are some that pretend to observe the Lord's Day, and yet spend the greatest part of it in any indifferent employment or recreation no way serviceable to the ends of Religion. Now this being one of the principal ends of your meeting together,

this must needs be a great encouragment to you, that in this you resemble the blessed Saints of the pure and primitive Church.

3dly, We find in my Text, that they continued stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine: They were all of one Faith and one Church, and had no controversies nor difference of opinion; for their business was not to dispute about notions and empty speculations, but those few fundamental truths which the Apostles taught 'em, they all unanimously agree'd in, and proceeded upon this foundation to build the superstructure of a holy and devout Life. And this being one of your Laws, and the chief foundation of your Societies, that your members shall

all be of one Church, and one Religion, and shall continue stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine, in the Doctrine of the Apostolical Church Establish't in this Kingdom; and that they shall not meddle with disputes and controversies, but wholly apply themselves to works of Piety; I need not insist longer upon your agreement with them in this particular; but only exhort and entreat you to keep up to this principle, and as you tender the preservation of your Societies, never to admit of controversies in Religion, nor of such men as are addicted to 'em, but to exclude all that are not peaceably inclined. And tho you are to love your enemies, yet you must deny 'em this kindness, of making 'em members of your

Societies before they are members of your Church: For if they tear the Church asunder when they have so many commands in the Scripture for the contrary, how can you expect they should preserve an inviolable union with you? but if you do in a kind and amicable way refuse to joyn with 'em, you will both secure your selves, and in time gain Proselytes to the Church.

4thly, They continued also in breaking of bread, that is receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper: But whether this was daily or weekly, it does not certainly appear in the Scriptures. For by the *46th* verse of this Chapter it seems to have been daily. And they continued daily in the Temple, and breaking

ing of bread from house to house: as if he had laid, that they went every day to the Temple to pray, as the custom was among the devout Jews, and from thence they went to their houses, and broke bread, or received the Communion together from the Apostles hands, which at that time they were forced to do privately in their houses. But in the 20th Chapter we find that the first day of the week was particularly set apart for Celebrating this Solemnity; and by that time 'tis likely they found it inconvenient to receive every day, and therefore appointed one day in the week to be for ever kept holy on this account chiefly, and to serve instead of the Jewish Sabbath. This practice of

theirs you do in some measure imitate by your monthly Communion, to which you oblige all your members, unless in cases of necessity and extraordinary casualties; and I don't question but in time you may come up to the perfection of Communicating weekly, and by your examples incite so many others, that all the Clergy may be encouraged to administer the Sacrament every week in their Churches; for this was done by the whole Primitive Church for many hundred years; and this our Liturgy supposes to be done by us, where a Communion is implied as often as the Communion-Service is read; and this you'd be truly and properly observing the Lord's-Day, which was first appointed for this

this purpose, and consecrated chiefly by this Selemnity.

5thly, You find in my Text that they continued also in prayers; and so in the 12*th* Chapter, that they used to meet together for prayer, tho the Apostles were not with 'em. Not only each family had its own family devotion, as we read of *Cornelius* in the 10*th* Chapt. but several people met at one house to stir up and increase each other's Devotion. For tho amongst Devotion is most cool in publick [illegible] Society does [illegible] it, as fuel add[illegible] and indeed all [illegible] do thrive and [illegible] example, and in [illegible]ny. Now the word, Pra[illegible] be taken in a large sense, as [illegible] very often

ten in the Scriptures, not only for petitions and addreſſes immediately directed to God, but for reading the Scriptures, and for pious Diſcourſes, and any holy Exerciſe proper for ſuch Societies. And in this particular you alſo agree with theſe Primitive converts: Tho as to Prayer ſtrictly ſo taken, you are forced to be brief in that reſpect at your Meetings, and thoſe few Collects, you uſe to take 'em chiefly out of the Churches Liturgy, leſt you ſhou'd be thought to deſpiſe the Churches Service, as too many do in theſe licentious times.

6thly, Another Vertue which abounded in the firſt Chriſtians, was that of Charity or Alms-giving. For we are told in the verſes following my Text, that

that they had all things in common, and sold their possessions & goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And so in the 4th Chapter and 32th Verse.—That none of them said that ought of the things he possess'd was his own, but they had all things common. But this extraordinary degree, or rather this way of Charity by selling and dividing their possessions, was proper to that time, and that particular number of Christians, and not afterwards imitated, even by the Primitive Church. For then there was no danger nor possibility of wanting, tho they sold their possessions, because the Divine Providence had an extraordinary and particular care over those men, as appears by

that

that passage in the 11th Chap. of the *Acts*, where *Agabus* prophesied of a Famine that was approaching, and gave warning to make provision for the Saints that dwelt at *Jerusalem*, which were the people mention'd in my Text. And besides, this Society of men being a sort of Nursery to the Catholick Church of the whole World, and the members of it continually chosen out to be sent abroad, they had reason to sell their Lands, and do many other things which are not so necessary in a settled condition of the Church. The right imitation therefore of these Christians consists in this, in being extraordinary charitable to the utmost of our abilities; and if we have but little, in giving gladly of that little:

and

and yet if we have nothing, our charity may be like theirs, as we find in the next Chapter, where St. *Peter* and St. *John* the chief of all the Church had neither Gold nor Silver, and cou'd give no Alms to the poor Beggar. And thus you imitate the firſt Chriſtians at your meetings, by giving Alms according to your abilities, and making this one part of your employment at that time, to conſider what objects of charity are in greateſt want of your relief, and contribute your mite to 'em, which our Saviour ſays, is as great as all the treaſures of rich men: and ſurely when others that are more able to give Alms, are ſtir'd up by your example, they will be aſhamed to give ſo ſparingly as the cuſtom is now a-

mong the wealthier ſort of people.

Under this head of Charity I muſt add ſomething concerning Juſtice to our Neighbour, a Vertue moſt ſtrictly obſerv'd by all the Primitive Chriſtians, in their contracts and dealings with other men. For tho it is not expreſly mention'd in this place, yet it is plainly intimated, and follows of neceſſity from the other Vertue. For if they were ſo charitable as to give all their Riches and Eſtates to the poor, they cou'd not be ſuppoſed to do any act of injuſtice, tho they might gain the whole World by it. And this I mention to you, becauſe by your profeſſions you are always employed in thoſe actions that are the ſubject of Juſtice: and therefore

fore as you have already gain'd a great reputation for honesty and fair dealing, so I must beg and entreat you to take a particular care hereafter of all your actions in reference to this duty; that you may not be like the hypocrites of these times, that pretend piety, & design advantage; but like the Christians in my Text, that thought of nothing but the necessaries of Life, and despised riches and all other blessings when they came in competition with the duties of Justice and Charity.

7thly. Another Vertue, and the last I shall mention, in which you agree with them, is a fervent zeal and concern for the conversion and salvation of other men: the noblest of all

the Graces, and the perfection and fulneſs, or rather the overflowing of Religion and Piety; than which nothing can be more acceptable to God, more ſerviceable to the Church, and more advantagious to your own ſouls. For *they that bring many to righteouſneſs, ſhall ſhine like the ſtars for ever and ever*; and not only ſhall be like the Angels, but like the Son of God, whoſe only buſineſs upon earth, was to reform and ſave Sinners from deſtruction. Now, the Chriſtians mention'd in my Text, were above all others remarkable for this Vertue: they met together, as an heathen Author ſaid of 'em, not to conſpire againſt the Government, but againſt Injuſtice, and Adultery, and other Sins: and all their ambi-

ambition, and their whole employment was, to root out Errors and Irreligion from the hearts of men. And tho it was the peculiar office of the Apoſtles and Miniſters of the Goſpel, to Preach publickly to others, yet to admoniſh and inſtruct privately they thought their duty, and never reſted from performing it. Thus in the 18*th* Chap. of the *Acts*, *Aquila* and *Priſcilla* took *Apollos* to them, and in private expounded the way of God to him more perfectly. And ſuch expreſſions as theſe are common in St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles: Greet *Aquila* and *Priſcilla* my helpers in Chriſt; Salute *Tryphena* and *Tryphoſa*, who labour in the Lord. For if the people had not been zealous in promoting the common work

of Piety, and true Religion, by admoniſhing and inſtructing in a private way every man his own Friends & Acquaintances, 'tis impoſſible that the few Apoſtles and Clergy of thoſe times ſhou'd have gain'd the tith of thoſe innumerable proſelytes to Goodneſs and Chriſtianity. And the ſame thing may be affirm'd of this preſent age, that if others do not help the Clergy, and contribute what aſſiſtance is proper for them towards the work of Reformation, we muſt expect that Vertue will ſtill decay, and the World grow worſe, and more irreligious every day.

I know few or none, excepting your ſelves, that are ſenſible of this duty; but you have endeavour'd to imitate the pat-

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tern ſet before you in my Text; and have made your ſelves like the firſt Chriſtians, a nurſery and ſeminary of Vertue, and good Morality, and true Religion; and God has ſhewed his approbation of your deſign, as he did in the firſt planting of Chriſtianity, by the great ſucceſs of your labours, and the extraordinary encreaſe of your number in ſo ſhort a time as it has been ſince you begun this work: ſo great an increaſe, that if it ſhou'd continue in the ſame proportion but a few years longer, Vertue wou'd become the faſhion, and Vice grow ſcandalous for want of number to encourage and defend it. I might here uſe a multitude of arguments, to ſhew how it is your duty, and your intereſt; your

eternal

eternal intereſt, and the intereſt of the Church and Kingdom, that you ſhou'd continue ſtedfaſt and immovable in this Vertue; and how encreaſe and multiply, is not only the firſt & moſt neceſſary command of the Creation, but in a ſpiritual ſenſe of the Goſpel alſo, and the Chriſtian Religion. But my deſign was to preſs upon you this and the other duties only by the motive of conforming your ſelves to the firſt and beſt of all Chriſtians, which I thought was moſt likely to prevail upon all that have the right and genuine temper of Chriſtianity.

And thus far I have made the compariſon between you and them in 7 Particulars. 1 In meeting together to carry on the publick work 2 In meeting

ing upon the Lord's-Day to keep that holy. 3 In continuing ſtedfaſtly in one Apoſtolical Faith. 4 In breaking of bread, or receiving the Communion frequently. 5 In continuing alſo in Prayer both publick and private. 6 In Charity or Alms-giving. 7 In Zeal and Fervor, for the Converſion and Salvation of other men. Which Rules of your Society may you always obſerve, and never fail to have the ſame ſucceſs with which God has hitherto bleſt your endeavours.

But as you are like the firſt Chriſtians in all theſe particulars, ſo you muſt remember that there is one thing which I intimated at firſt, in which you cannot reſemble them; and that is the miraculous power of the holy

Holy Ghoſt, which for many years upheld and encouraged their endeavours. You muſt not expect, I ſay, that God will work ſuch wonders, as he did then, for your aſſiſtance and encouragement; for the time of miracles is over, and therefore

In the 1ſt place, ſince you cannot depend upon miracles, be ſo much the more careful and diligent in your work, and make up the want of them by reſolution and conſtancy. You will meet with the ſame obſtacles and the ſame dangers, excepting Martyrdom, but be not diſcouraged or frightned by it; ſome will laugh at you, and others will cenſure and affront you, and perhaps your numbers may not encreaſe as you expect; but let not all this diſhearten you, for

your

your design is noble and heroick, and your labour will be rewarded as much as if you had converted the whole world to a sense of Piety and Religion.

2dly, Since you have no miracles to preserve you, nor any extraordinary inspiration, such as the first Christians had, to direct you; therefore beware of your selves and your own infirmities, lest they betray you into Error, and ruin the glorious design you are engaged in. You must therefore resolve strictly to observe all the Laws you have agreed to: you must not depend wholly upon your own knowledge, but ask counsel of those that are wiser, and especially your own Pastors: you must work out the salvation of other men, as you do your own,

with

with fear and trembling: you muſt rebuke without cenſoriouſneſs, and triumph over Sin without pride or inſolence; and ſince you are not infallibly guided by the Spirit, you muſt take a particular care of avoiding all diſputes and differences among your ſelves, for which there can be no better way, than to reſolve never to meddle with any controverſy, no, not concerning morality it ſelf, ſo far as to fall into any heats and animoſities about it.

Theſe Cautions, if you obſerve, and continue in your good reſolutions, the bleſſings of God will undoubtedly attend your endeavours, and the whole Nation may in time feel the good effects of your labours. At leaſt your own reward will be extraordinary

traordinary, in proportion to the good you deſign, whether you ſucceed or no. The Pſalmiſt when he deſired a bleſſing from God, to gain his favour, made a vow to give him what he thought above all things wou'd pleaſe him; which thing if thou wilt grant me, then ſhall the righteous reſort unto my company. To live in the Society of good men, is the moſt acceptable offering we can make to the Almighty, eſpecially when good men meet together to encreaſe the number of the righteous, by inſtructing the ignorant, and reforming the wicked: this is not only pleaſing to God, but an occaſion of joy to all the Angels in Heaven, and he that encreaſes now the joy of that place, may expect to partake of it abundantly hereafter.

THE
Method to be obſerv'd
By The
Several Religious Societies
When they meet together.

1ſt. AT their firſt meeting they may diſcourſe of what Sermons they have heard, what good Books they have ſeen and read, or upon any other pious Subject, till a competent number be come together.

2. Then the *Prelector* (who is the ſame with the Steward) muſt begin the Prayers with one or more of theſe Sentences.

Behold how good and joyful a thing it is, for Brethren to dwell together in unity, *Pſ.* 133. ver. 1.

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou ſhalt ſay, I have no pleaſure in them, *Eccleſ.* 12 Ch. ver. 1.

Exhort one another while it is called to day, leaſt any of you be hardned through the deceitfulneſs of ſin; knowing, that he that converteth a Sinner from the error of his ways, ſhall ſave a ſoul from death, and ſhall cover a multitude of ſins, *James* 5 Ch. ver. 20.

Then let every man kneel.

Prel. Let us Pray,

Lord have mercy upon us.

Anſ. *Chriſt have mercy upon us.*

Prel.

Prel. Lord have mercy upon us.

Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy Name; Thy Kingdom come, thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven: Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our Treſpaſſes as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us; and lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory, for ever and ever, *Amen.*

Prel. O Lord ſave thy Servants,

Anſ. *Who put their truſt in thee.*

Prel. Send us help from above,

Anſ. *And evermore mightily defend us.*

Prel. Help us, O God, our Saviour,

Anſ. *And for the glory of thy Name deliver us; be merciful to us Sinners, for thy Names ſake.*

Prel. O Lord, ſave thy Servant, King *William.*

Anſ. *And give him the victory over all his Enemies.*

Prel. O Lord, hear our Prayer,

Anſ. *And let our Cry come unto thee.*

Prel. Let us Pray,

O God the ſtrength of all them that put their truſt in thee, mercifully accept our Prayers: and becauſe through the weakneſs of our mortal natures we can do no good thing without thee, grant us the help of thy grace, that in keeping thy Command-

mandments, we may pleaſe thee both in will and deed, thro Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, *Amen.*

Almighty God, who ſeeſt that we have no power of our ſelves to help our ſelves, keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our ſouls, that we may be defended from all adverſities that may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may aſſault and hurt the ſoul, thro Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, *Amen.*

O Almighty God who alone canſt order the *unruly* wills & affections of ſinful men, grant unto thy *people*, that they may love the thing which thou commandeſt, and deſire that which thou doſt promiſe that ſo among the ſundry

ſundry and manifold changes of the World our hearts may ſurely there be fixt where true joys are to be found, thro Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, *Amen.*

O Lord we beſeech thee mercifully to hear us, and grant that we to whom thou haſt given a hearty deſire to Pray, may by thy mighty aid be defended and comforted in all dangers and adverſities, and devoutly given to ſerve thee in all good works, to the glory of thy name, thro Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, *Amen.*

Bleſſed Lord, who haſt cauſed all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may in ſuch wiſe hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digeſt them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy word, we may embrace, and ever hold faſt

that

that bleſſed hope of everlaſting Life, which thou haſt given us in our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, *Amen.*

Here all ſtanding the *Prælector* ſhall ſay,

Prel. O praiſe the Lord with me.

Anſ. *Let us magnify his name together.*

Prel. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghoſt.

Anſ. *As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever ſhall be, World without end, Amen.*

Then ſhall all ſay after the *Prelector.*

It is meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we ſhou'd at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, Almighty, everlaſting

laſting God. Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of Heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praiſing thee, and ſaying, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Hoſts, Heaven and Earth are full of thy glory; Glory be to thee, O Lord moſt high, *Amen.*

After this the *Prelector* ſhall name a *Pſalm*, or part of a *Pſalm*, which they ſhall all ſing.

8. Then the *Prelecter* ſhall read diſtinctly a Chapter or more out of the New Teſtament, where it relates moſt to practiſe, together with Dr. *Hammond*'s paraphraſe, or any other good comment, to be approv'd of by the Biſhop, or ſome Ortho-

Orthodox Miniſter of the Eſtabliſh'd Church.

4. Afterwards he ſhall read a portion of ſome Expoſition on the Church Catechiſm, or ſome other practical good Book, to be approv'd of as above; and this may be ſhorter or longer, according as the time will permit.

5. Then ſhall every man that is able, give his Alms for the Poor; and whilſt this is doing, the Prelector ſhall read as many of theſe following Sentences as he thinks convenient.

Let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven, *Mat.* 5. 18.

Lay

Lay not up for your ſelves treaſures upon Earth, where the ruſt and moth doth corrupt, and where thieves break through & ſteal; but lay up for your ſelves treaſures in Heaven, where neither ruſt nor moth doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and ſteal, *Mat.6.* 19, 20.

While we have time, let us do good unto all men, and eſpecially unto them who are of the houſhold of [illegible] *l.6.* 10.

God is not unrighteous, that he will forget your [illegible]orks and labour, [illegible]t proceedeth of love, which love ye have ſhewed for his names ſake, who have miniſtred to the Saints, and yet do miniſter, *Heb.* 6. 10.

To

To do good, and to distribute, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased, *Heb.* 13. 16

Be merciful after thy power; if thou hast much, give plenteously; if thou hast little, do thy diligence gladly to give of that little, for so gatherest thou thy self a good reward in the day of necessity, *Tobi* 4. 8, 9.

He that hath pitty on the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and look what he layeth out, it shall be paid him again, *Prov.* 19. 17.

Blessed is he that provideth for the poor and needy: the Lord shall deliver him in the time of trouble, *Psal.* 41. 1.

When they have given their alms, they shall stay a while, if they have time, and discourse

upon any pious ſubject that offers, *viz.* what objects of Charity they know, particularly ſuch as have lived well heretofore: and what young men of their acquaintance may be gain'd over to a vertuous converſation; and if there be any difficulty, or caſe of Conſcience neceſſary to be reſolved, or any religious affair to be ſettled, let it be then propounded, and calmly diſcourſed of.

After which, let a Pſalm be ſung, and after that, let them all repeat the Apoſtles Creed ſtanding; and then let the Prelector conclude with theſe Collects, every man kneeling.

C. Aſſiſt us mercifully, O Lord, in theſe our ſupplications and Prayers, and diſpoſe the way of thy ſervants towards the

the attainment of everlasting salvation: that among all the changes and chances of this mortal life, they may ever be defended by thy most gracious and ready help, thro Jesus Christ our Lord, *Amen.*

O Almighty Lord, and everlasting God; vouchsafe, we beseech thee, to direct, sanctify & govern both our hearts and bodies in the ways of thy laws, and in the works of thy Commandments, that through thy most mighty protection both here & ever, we may be preserved both in body and soul, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, *Amen.*

Blessed Lord, who hast taught us, that all our doings without Charity are nothing worth; send thy Holy Ghost, and pour

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Blessed Lord, who hast taught us, that all our doings without Charity are nothing worth; send thy Holy Ghost, and pour

into our hearts that moſt excellent gift of Charity; that we may love thee above all things, and ſincerely love our neighbour for thy ſake, and endeavor the benefit of his precious ſoul. Make us ever more fearful of his danger, than of his diſpleaſure, and more deſirous of his good than of his favour. Give us therefore Chriſtian courage to reprove, wiſdom to adviſe, councel to direct, and prudence to know how, and when, and what to ſpeak, as we ought to do: and, O, let a ſpirit of reformation be in us, to put a ſtop to that profaneſs & irreligion that reigns among us: and do thou magnify thy power in the weakneſs of the inſtruments thou makeſt uſe of. Give us clean and pure hearts, and ſo ſtrengthen

then our good reſolutions with thy holy Spirit, that we may never faint, nor grow weary of the work we have undertaken. And that it may be ſucceſsful, give us the ſpirit of Love, and Peace, and Unity, that no differences may ever diſturb us, or hinder our deſign of teaching Sinners thy ways, and drawing others to thy love; that ſo when thou ſhalt come to gather thy Saints together, we may be found an acceptable people in thy ſight: to whom, with the Father, and the holy Spirit, be all praiſe and glory now and for ever, *Amen.*

O moſt holy and gracious Lord, who in the holy Scriptures haſt told us, that tho we ſhou'd perform all that thou haſt commanded, we are ſtill unprofita-

ble

ble Servants: we proſtrate our ſelves before thee, with the loweſt humility of ſoul and body, acknowledging that we are but ſinful duſt and aſhes, and not only unprofitable, but diſobedient, and ungrateful to thee: and we beſeech thee to inſpire into our hearts ſuch a ſenſe of our own unworthineſs, that no ſucceſs may make us high-minded, no perfections of our own make us proud and conceited, nor the ſins of other men make us uncharitable and cenſorious: that whilſt we endeavour to bring others into the way of Piety and Religion, we our ſelves may not be caſt away. O, let us not boaſt with the Phariſee, of our labours and ſervices, what-ever they ſhall be, but rather with the Publican, ſmite

ſmite our breaſts, and ſay, Lord be merciful to us ſinners, thro the merits of Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour, *Amen.*

O GOD, our Refuge and Strength, who art the Author of all Godlineſs; hear, we beſeech thee, the devout Prayers of thy Servants; and grant that thoſe things which we have ask'd faithfully, we may obtain effectually, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, *Amen.*

The Lord bleſs us, and keep us; the Lord lift up his countenance upon us, and give us Peace now and for evermore. *Amen.*

A Prayer

A Prayer to be uſed before the laſt Collect, by the Societies of Married men. Taken out of the 91 *Pſalm.*

O Almighty Lord, under whoſe defence and ſhadow, we and our Families do dwell in ſecurity! We bleſs thy Name for all thy former mercies, and we beſeech thee to continue thy care and protection of us, and all our concerns. Thou art our hope, and our ſtrong hold, and our God, in whom we will truſt; O defend us under thy wings, and let us be ſafe under thy feathers, and let thy faithfulneſs and truth be our ſhield and buckler. Let us not be afraid of any terror by night, nor of the arrow that flieth by day;

day; nor the peſtilence that walketh in darkneſs, nor the ſickneſs that deſtroyeth at noon-day. Let no evil happen unto us, nor any plague come nigh our dwellings; and give thy Angels charge over us (and our Families) to keep us in all thy ways; that after thou haſt bleſt us with a good life in this world, thou mayeſt ſhew us thy ſalvation in the world to come. For the ſake and merits of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, *Amen.*

Rules

Rules to be conſented to, and ſubſcribed by ſuch as deſire to be Members of the Religious Societies in the Kingdom of Ireland.

1. THE ſole deſign of theſe Societies being to promote holineſs of life, 'tis neceſſary that all ſuch as deſire to be admitted into any one of the ſaid Societies, ſhould in the firſt place firmly reſolve to lead a regular life in all ſoberneſs, righteouſneſs, and godlineſs: and endeavour to keep their ſouls in an habitual preparation for the worſhip of God, by the conſideration of his omnipreſence, and pious reflections upon the daily

daily occurrences of Providence.

2. None ſhall be of this Society, but ſuch as own and manifeſt themſelves to be members of the Eſtabliſh'd Church of *Ireland*, and frequent as often as conveniently they can, the Liturgy and holy Offices of the ſaid Church, and ſuch as do not frequent, nor joyn with any other Church diſſenting from it.

3. Every member of this Society ſhall come every Lord's-Day to the place appointed for the meeting of the Society, as ſoon as Evening Prayer and Sermon is over; and if it can be done conveniently, about eight a Clock alſo in the morning: and there muſt behave himſelf according to the method preſcribed

ſcribed in this caſe. But if any man abſent himſelf, he muſt give his reaſon for it at the next meeting; and if he abſent himſelf habitually, he muſt be proceeded againſt according to the 5*th* Rule.

4. All the power of every Society conſiſts in the votes of the majority or greater number. But becauſe it is not couvenient upon every trifling matter to proceed to votes, and alſo that confuſion may be avoided, it will be neceſſary to chuſe a Steward or Moderator once every quarter of a year, out of thoſe members that are of longeſt ſtanding in the Society: and to leave to him the ordering, and managing, and propounding, and executing of buſineſs. But if he does any thing which others of

the Society do not approve of, they may proceed to votes, and order it according to the desire of the majority. The Steward is to be the Prelector at their devotion, and he may name his successor, as the custom has been: but if any one objects against him, he must be chosen by votes.

5. In the case of scandalous conversation, or any crime whatsoever, the person offending is to be privately advis'd and admonish'd by his friends in the Society to reform, and shew his penitence by his future behaviour. But if they cannot prevail, the Steward, with the consent of the Society, is to pass a publick censure upon him, and warn him against a certain time, to assure the Society

ciety of his ſincere repentance and reformation: And if he ſhall continue impenitent, he ſhall be ordered to withdraw, and not be admitted again till he be fit for it, and earneſtly deſire it.

6. No man is to be admitted into the Society before a quarter of a years trial, in which time he muſt be preſent at their meeting, but has no power nor vote in any affair: and at his admiſſion he may be deſir'd by the Steward, to tell the Society the reaſons why he would be admitted a member of it.

7. Every member of this Society muſt endeavor to make other perſons of his acquaintance vertuous, and religious, and wiſe to ſalvation. But he muſt not bring any ſuch man

to the place of meeting, without leave firſt obtain'd from the Society.

8. He muſt ſolemnly offer up his private devotions to God Almighty, at leaſt every morning, and every night: and in his Prayers crave a bleſſing upon the Societies.

9. 'Tis convenient that every man keep a Faſt privately once a month, if at his own diſpoſal; and for this, to chooſe a time which the Church has appointed for Faſting.

10. Every member is requir'd to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's-Supper, if poſſible, once a month, in his own Pariſh-Church; and ſhou'd endeavour to uſe himſelf in time to a more frequent obſervation of that holy ſolemnity.

11. The

11. The members of this Society muſt viſit and aſſiſt their Brethren when they are ſick, or under any other affliction; and as often as they have opportunity, they muſt ſhew the like Charity to all other men according to their abilities.

12. They muſt carefully ſhun all wicked company: but if it cannot be avoided, they muſt take care not to ſhew any ſinful compliance; but to expreſs their diſlike or abhorrence, if any ſin be committed in word or deed by any one in their company: They muſt altogether abſtain from Gaming houſes & other ſinful places, and as ſeldom as poſſible be at any publick Houſes, ſuch as Ale-houſes and Taverns; and when they are there, to avoid carefully all intemperance.

13.

13. When any of 'em meet together, they ſhall take all occaſions to promote religious diſcourſes, and not meddle with matters of Government, or any unneceſſary diſputes and controverſies.

14. There are ſome particular Vices which they muſt take a ſpecial care to avoid; ſuch as ſpiritual pride, and the effects of it; as railing, anger, peeviſhneſs, and impatience of contradiction; and ſuch alſo is the ſin of injuſtice in their dealings and contracts; which if it be not carefully avoided, will make all religious Societies ſcandalous, and more hurtful than advantagious to Religion.

15. The members of theſe Societies muſt take great care of giving others an occaſion of cen-

cenſuring them, by any affected geſture, carriage, or diſcourſe in their ordinary converſation.

16. If any diſpute happens between two members, the reſt ſhall endeavour to reconcile 'em. But if any great and dangerous difference ſhou'd happen which cannot well be decided and ended among themſelves, they ſhall all be obliged to ſtand to the judgment of their Pariſh Miniſter, and if he cannot end the Controverſy, they muſt finally appeal to the Biſhop of the Dioceſs.

17. The Societies have power to make ſuch Rules among themſelves, as ſhall appear hereafter to be neceſſary or convenient, with the approbation of the Biſhop.

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